

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: January 26, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present remotely via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others present via zoom: David Seligman, Barbara Kalish, Shannon Poulin, Rebecca Turner, Juliette Haas, Bill Tynan, Eileen Vining, Fred Gordan, David Rejeski, Susan Bachelder, Joyce Frater, Mary McGurn, Maj Wexler, Joan Goodkind, Jayne Smith.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

There were some technical difficulties at the beginning of the meeting.

MINUTES:

The minutes of January 11, 12 and 19 meetings were accepted with minor edits.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board reviewed a draft policy directive requiring town hall employees with regular posted hours to sign in/out when leaving during work hours for any reason. Edits will be made and presented for adoption at the next meeting.

The Board met Shannon Poulin, candidate for the Conservation Commission clerical position. The Commission has interviewed her. The Human Resources Committee would like to interview her. The Board postponed appointing until its next meeting.

The Board reluctantly and with regrets accepted the resignation of Michael Bandzierz from the Finance Committee.

Fred Gordan presented information on the Community Preservation Act, its benefits to the Town, costs to taxpayers and state match of funds. The Town stands to raise about \$52,000 annually with a 3% surcharge. The cost to a taxpayer whose home is valued at \$1,000,000 is \$63 per quarter. It was noted that it requires a Town Meeting vote and then an election vote at the next regularly scheduled municipal or state election but the town clerk must have at least 35 days advance notice. The Board voted as follows: Vice-chair Vermeulen and Selectboard member Brazie in favor of placing on the next town meeting warrant whether that be a special town meeting or the annual town meeting. Chairman McGurn abstained. It was noted that educating the voters would be very important.

All members of the Board have reviewed the most recent Housing Committee meeting recording and agree that the Committee should not be confused in what it has been tasked to do, which is to make a recommendation to the Board on how to move forward with some form of affordable housing at the town hall site. The Board was also concerned over a plan proposing 17 units at the site. It was agreed that was too many. Joan Goodkind, Chair of the Housing Committee, said the Committee agreed and were looking at 4-6 units. One question that remains is will the units be ownership or rental. The Board also noted that the CDC will get no funds from the Town. The Affordable Housing Committee will be seeking funding to help them move forward with their planning.

Juliette Haas introduced Dave Rejeski as a proposed member of the Municipal Vulnerability Program Planning Committee. Mr. Rejeski was asked to send background information in an email to the Board for consideration. Juliette noted that appointments to the MVP Planning Committee will be asked for in the near future.

COVID-19:

The Board discussed the need for a policy regarding COVID-19 related time off as the FFCRA has expired which gave employees 14 days paid time off, not to be charged to sick or vacation time, if they were out of work for illness, family care or child care related to the pandemic. The Board also discussed a possible policy about the COVID-19 vaccine and considered using time off as an incentive to employees to get vaccinated. If a policy to require the vaccine is adopted, bargaining will need to take place with the unions. Selectboard member Brazie noted that she will recuse herself from a vote on these policies. The Board will consider its options and understands the urgency.

Juliette Haas and Jayne Smith, Covid Compliance Officer, noted that Phase 2 vaccine portals will be released this week as Phase 2 vaccination of those over 75 years of age begins on February 1. Things will move quickly as more vaccine is received by the Commonwealth. A contact list and means of contacting residents over 75 is being compiled. The phone alert system may be used.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Board will meet with the Finance Committee and the School District Planning Committee on Thursday, January 28 to discuss the proposal for funds from the 8 towns involved to move forward with consolidation planning.

SELECTMEN'S ITEMS:

The Board will meet on February 2 at 10am via zoom for budget review and February 9 at 10am via zoom in regular session.

Adjournment 11:38am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.21/nov24

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.